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ENCOUNTER ON MYSTERY MOUNTAIN

M.J. Graeber

DURING the fall of 1973, a flap of UFO activity was reported throughout the United States and seemed to be particularly heavy along the eastern seaboard. At the time of this reported activity, UFORIC (the Philadelphia-based UFO Report and Information Center) consisted of four volunteer field investigators who were simply overwhelmed with the deluge of sighting reports that were coming into the Center.

UFORIC was receiving reports from police authorities, two independent newspapers, technicians at the Fels Planetarium, several airports, as well as direct calls from the general public. As a result of this heavy influx of reports, it became necessary to select which incidents would receive immediate attention and which reports would be handled at a later date. Naturally, this resulted in some cases falling through the cracks in the system; while others were simply rejected because they seemed to be lacking the "elements of strangeness" that we were looking for in the reports' scenario.

So-called "nocturnal light sightings", especially those of apparent high altitude and distance from the observers, were not given a very high priority; while "multi-witnessed events" were thought to be the most promising incidents to pursue (e.g. *Magonia's* readers may recall the report on the investigation of UFO activity which occurred at Bristol/Levittown, Pa. - see *Magonia Supplement* No. 48, October 2002).

But, there were also "lone witness reports" that caught our attention and we did not have the opportunity to thoroughly investigate some of these cases. The results of our many inquiries regarding these reported incidents were mixed. Some cases were identified as mundane "misidentifications" of one type or another, while others seemed to elude evaluation and were categorised as either "probable" or "possible"

misidentifications of stars, aircraft, planetary bodies, satellites, birds, meteors, smoke, unusual cloud formations, advertising blimps, kites or hoaxes, etc.

One of the more interesting reports of that period involved the observation of a light-encrusted object that the witness described as a "flying Christmas tree". UFORIC/APRO field investigator Mike McClellan interviewed the witness (Mr Ted Dolan) and filed this transcript of that interview along with his investigative report. It should be noted that Mike was a thorough and reliable field investigator and that he was a valued member of UFORIC. Mike passed away in October of 2004 and I will surely miss the warmth of his friendship and laughter. He was a devoted foster parent to many youngsters over the years and I know that he cared for and loved each of his "kids" beyond measure.

Edited transcript of interview with UFO witness

Interview date: 22 October 1973

Witness: Mr Ted Dolan (pseudonym) (D)

UFO researcher: Mr Michael McClellan (M)

UFO sighting of 15 October 1973 near Numidia, Pa.

Case report commentary: Matt Graeber (G), February 2004

M: So, I guess Numidia would be the closest town to where this incident took place?

D: Yeah, I think so. But, Numidia is just a few houses, not a town at all.

G: Numidia, Pennsylvania, is located about 140 miles north-west of Philadelphia in Columbia County. It is a very small community which is surrounded by the towns of Roaring Creek, Aristes, Mt. Carmel, Mill Grove and Centralia which is a community that had to be completely abandoned because

of a coal mine fire that raged beneath its streets for years.

M: About what time did you first see it, Ted?

D: Well, I'd say it was about 5:40, twenty to six a.m. ... because I leave the house around 5:30.

M: I guess that it was still dark at that time of the morning?

D: Yes, it was dark, very dark; but, I could see stars and I think the moon was out too.

M: Do you remember what phase the moon was in?

D: Well, I didn't notice anything like that, I mean I never studied stars and planets or stuff like that.

M: Tell me, Ted, do you remember what the weather was like that morning?

D: I couldn't tell you what the temperature was ... but, it was mild. There wasn't any moisture on my car's hood or windshield.

G: It was a common practice for the field investigator to confirm that the witness's recollection of weather conditions at the time of his or her UFO experience were correct.

M: So, I suppose that you didn't have to use your automobile's defroster or heater?

D: That's right. I could have been comfortable without the heater being on but I did have it on "low" because I wasn't feeling real good that morning.

M: Did you have the flu or perhaps a cold?

D: Well, to tell you the truth, I had a mild

case of the diarrhoea that morning.

M: Okay, so tell me what happened ... how did you first notice the object?

D: I noticed it as I was driving up the hill. I was pretty near the top when I first saw its lights blinking off and on - they were reflecting off the hood of my car.

M: What colour were these lights, Ted?

D: They were red, green and white. They were blinking and sort of turning as the thing went along.

M: Were there many lights on the object?

D: Yeah, there were a lot of them on the object and they seemed to be blinking all the time.

G: Red, green and white lights are the colours used on conventional aircraft's navigational and anti-collision beacons. Many UFO reports in which such lighting is described turn out to be "misidentifications" of aeroplanes (of various types and sizes) as well as helicopters. In some instances, the same colours are reported in errant observations of bright stars which are occasionally viewed through binoculars.

M: Did you hear any sounds coming from this object?

D: Not at first, as it flew in from behind me ... I mean. That's when I first saw the lights blinking off the hood of my car. But, when it was in front of me as I was looking up through the windshield, I could hear that it was humming.

M: So, the object may have been following you up the hill and you didn't hear it until it was directly overhead or, perhaps, until it flew in front of your car ... is that correct?

D: Well, when I was looking up through the windshield I couldn't see it real good ... so, I turned down the window and stuck my head out to get a better look at it.

M: What did it look like?

D: Kinda like a big truck tyre - that's what I thought. It was round with lights going around it.

M: So, it was disc-shaped?

D: Yeah, that's what I thought as I was looking up at the thing.

M: Can you describe this humming sound? Was it low or high pitched?

D: Ya know, it sort of reminded me of an electric razor. It was kinda low at first ... but, as it spun faster and faster it got louder too.

M: And as it spun and hummed, did the lights on it continue to blink off and on?

D: Oh yeah, they were blinking all the time. It was spinning, moving and blinking all the time.

M: Do you think you could tell me how high the object appeared to be as it flew above your car?

D: It's hard to say ... but, I think it was about a hundred feet or so above the trees on that road.

M: Do you have any idea how large the object may have been?

D: It was big like a truck tyre while it was above me; but, I think that if it had landed it probably would have covered the blacktop.

M: Do you think that it may have been large enough to have people inside it?

D: Well, I guess it probably was. It was big!

M: And you say that it was spinning and moving above you?

D: Well, it was sort of staying in one place and I was almost directly under it ... but, it was spinning and making that humming noise.

M: So, I guess that it was hovering above and slightly in front of your car after it had approached you from behind?

D: That's right. Ya know, I don't mind telling ya that I was plenty scared. I was thinking that the thing was gonna land on the road or something. That's when the big bright light on it lit up the whole

damn place ... and the heat coming off that thing was almost unbearable.

G: The emission of heat from UFOs had been frequently reported in the UFO literature and it is thought (by many ufologists) to be linked to the object's propulsion system or weaponry.

M: Was this a straight beam of light that shot out of the object or did it sort of fan out like a cone of light?

D: It came from the bottom of the object. There was something shiny like an auto's air filter on the bottom (in the middle) - that's where the light came from. It lit things up bright as day ... maybe brighter ... like a lightning flash. I'll tell ya, if there were any deer in those woods I surely would have seen them. I saw a little dam that some fella's been building down in the woods; and, I thought that I was gonna die when that awful heat hit me.

G: Several UFO reports of that time period involved the appearance of light emissions described as being either a narrow beam, a very wide beam, and even a steady segmented beam that reminded the observer of the repetitious lines on a highway's surface.

M: Did you suffer any burns or injuries of any kind from this experience?

D: No, I don't think so ... but, the roof and the hood of my car was so hot that I couldn't touch it.

M: Did the heat cause the car's paint to blister or peel?

D: No, I can't say that it did 'cause it's an old car (1963) and the paint's not real good on it anyway.

M: I don't imagine that you had the car checked for radiation exposure?

D: No, I wouldn't have thought of anything like that.

G: Because the object appeared to hover at a relatively close proximity to the observer and was said to have emitted both bright light and heat, UFORIC's investigators dismissed a low-flying fixed-wing aircraft as a "probable cause" for the report's emergence. But, we did

ponder the "possibility" that a MedEvac helicopter dispatched to assist an accident victim on the mountain may have used a powerful searchlight to help in locating the accident scene on that dark mountain top. We even wondered if the military or law enforcement authorities had been using a helicopter fitted with searchlights and flares for some reason that morning. But, if Mr Dolan had misidentified a helicopter's lights as a UFO, and had such a pronounced reaction to his misperception of the aircraft, how are we to explain his exposure to the heat which he felt was emitted by the object? There were many investigative avenues to explore regarding Ted's encounter and quite a number of questions to follow up on, too.

M: Now, you said that you had your car's heater on "low" that morning. Do you think that it may have really been on "high" and maybe that's how the car felt so warm?

D: No way. That heater could never have got the roof of the car so hot! Like I told ya, the heater was on "low" and it was that bright light coming off that object's bottom that damn near fried me.

M: Okay Ted, what happened next?

D: I'll tell ya Mike, as all this was going on, my car's steering wheel pulled to the right and I couldn't turn it back. I had my foot on the brake pedal and the car just kept on going toward the right. I got real scared and thought about jumping out of the car and running down the mountain. Hell, I even thought about climbing a tree.

G: The presence of UFOs had been linked to many auto ignition malfunction cases in which the UFO was said to have been in close proximity to the witness's car. UFOs had also been suspected of causing blackouts - making aircraft instrumentation go haywire; and it is even believed that a UFO caused a Soviet ICBM in its silo to mysteriously activate its launch countdown sequence. According to the story, the frantic technicians at the silo couldn't shut the system down. Fortunately, when the UFO departed, the missile system returned to normal and the firing sequence halted. According to Soviet sources, the entire electronic system of the silo was

examined and it was found to be in perfect condition.

M: How fast were you driving at this time? Did you bail out of the car?

D: No. I didn't jump out of the car ... but, I nearly thought that it was gonna go over the edge of the road and run down into the woods. I was only going about 15 miles per hour at that point as I'm always thinking that a deer or a hunter may be wandering about on the road as I come over the crest of the hill. Like I say, the steering wheel pulled to the right and the car turned around ... not all the way around, sort of like a "U"; and I hit a couple of trees along the edge of the blacktop. That's where I ended up.

G: Mike and I were interested in further examining Ted's car and checking out its steering and braking systems. There was a possibility that if Ted's car had stalled, the power steering may have failed too.

M: So, you couldn't turn the steering wheel back to the left and the brakes wouldn't stop the car from going forward and toward the right? What happened then, Ted?

D: The thing started spinning faster and the hum got louder. Then it rose up and flew off over the trees. I watched it fly away through the rear window of my car. That's when I realised that it was shaped like a Christmas tree.

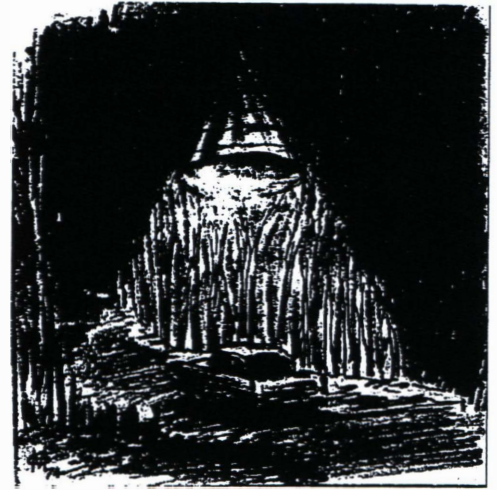
G: With a little assistance from Mike, Mr Dolan was able to sketch the object (as he recalled seeing it). It was a cone-shaped contraption fitted with what appeared to be rows of multi-coloured lights.

M: I know that you told a newspaper reporter from Bloomsburg about your sighting, Ted. Did you tell anyone else about it?

D: Well, of course, I told my wife and kids and I even told my minister about it too. I asked him if he thought that maybe my time was up when that thing appeared?

M: Did you discuss it with anyone else?

D: Yeah, I told a couple of fellas at work about it. One guy asked if I could have



Artist's rendition of Mr Dolan's UFO encounter

taken a picture of it with a camera and the other guy wanted to know if I could have taken a shot at it if I had my hunting rifle in the car? I told 'em both, "hell no!"

G: I planned to further explore Ted's comments about asking his minister if he thought that his "time was up", as I had heard similar statements from other UFO witnesses (even those who hadn't experienced auto malfunctioning or exposure to UFO emissions of any kind). Curiously, many of these observers were not familiar with the ancient tradition of Charon (i.e., the ferryman that transports the souls of the departed across the river Styx to the isle of the dead [or, to the underworld of Hades]). Yet, for some reason, these observers felt that the UFO was a "soul transporter" - something like the heavenly chariot that swings low and carries one home in a well-known Christian spiritual.

M: What happened then Ted?

D: When the thing took off, I just sat there in the car for about ten minutes. I guess that I was trying to get my bearings straight. I didn't know if I was heading up or down the hill and I still had the scare in me.

M: I assume that the object had departed by this point in time?

D: Oh yes. It flew up and over the trees and I was thinking that it was travelling about as fast as a baseball does when you hit it with a bat ... ya know, kinda like that.

M: What happened then Ted? Did you start going back down the mountain?

D: Well, I was trying to get the car back on the blacktop, and along comes this hunter in his car. He's got his head sticking out of the window and he's all excited and hollering, "Did you see that ... did you see that thing ... it just turned those deer in their tracks! I ain't never seen deer turn like that ... they just spun around and they were gone!"

M: Do you think that he meant that the object had somehow picked the deer up and turned them around?

D: No, I got the impression that he was talking about that bright light spooking the deer, and they turned away from it in a hurry.

M: Then what happened?

D: I guess that this guy was just about as shook up as I was. His car was rolling back and forth a bit with the engine revving and he was grinding gears, too. When he drove off he shouted, "So long, I'm heading to Shenandoah ... I ain't never gonna hunt in Columbia County again!"

G: At first I suspected that the appearance of the hunter in Ted's story was a serious problem, as the hunting season hadn't started until 26 November in 1973. But, I learned that "bow hunting" season had begun on 29 September. Not to mention the fact that "some poaching does occur from time to time", according to the Pennsylvania Game Commission representative that I spoke to on the matter.

M: Did this hunter describe what he had seen?

D: No, he was jabbering about those deer turning like they did. It all happened so quick and then he was gone.

M: Did you get a chance to ask the hunter's name?

D: No, all he wanted to do was get the hell out of there, and so did I. I'll tell ya Mike, I was thinking that maybe that damn thing was gonna come back.

M: Now, when your car was pulling to the right and went off the road, do you think that the object may have lifted it somehow? I'm wondering if there were any marks on the roof of your car?

D: I didn't see any marks on the roof, and I don't think that the car was picked up by the object. There were three tyre marks on the road showing where I went into the trees.

G: Mike's report indicated that Mr Dolan's auto had sustained very minor damage to its bumper and fender. The damage appeared to match up quite well with impact marks on two trees that were said to have finally brought the car to a halt.

M: How much time had elapsed during your experience Ted? How long do you think you watched the object?

D: I guess the whole thing took about two or three minutes from the time I saw the lights on my hood until the object was gone.

M: I'm wondering what you think the object may have been Ted?

D: I guess it was a space ship from another world. I mean, we're trying to go up there with our space programme ... so, I guess that maybe they're trying to come down here.

G: Mike's interview with Mr Dolan continued and information on his education and occupation was gathered. Mr Dolan was born on 20 January 1926. He dropped out of school in the 10th grade in order to help out at home (financially). He is married, has two children, and works for a painting contractor in Bloomsburg, Pa. He is a job foreman and supervises a work crew of 15 to 20 men. He's been working for the same firm for 19 years.

M: How did you feel the day after this experience Ted?

D: Sort of shaky and weak. I guess I was still nervous or something.

M: Any blurred vision or headaches?

D: Well, I thought I was getting a headache when I was looking up at that

bright light ... but, I didn't.

M: Okay Ted. Thanks for your co-operation. I'll give you a call and we'll get together again soon. I'd like to go back to the place where this all happened with another researcher. Would that be all right with you?

D: That'll be fine.

G: On 28 October Mike phoned Mr Dolan to confirm the date, time and location of our intended meeting near Numidia. Mike added this note to his report concerning that brief conversation. "After some discussion he (Ted Dolan) felt that there may have been a time lapse during which he does not recall all of the events regarding the turning of his car. He was definitely confused about it at that time. Mr Dolan also related that he has been having dreams. Not every night, but frequently - that the vehicle (i.e., UFO) actually landed on the road. He is now experiencing a vision problem but did not go into detail. Regarding the dream, he says that it is always unpleasant and that he is very relieved when he wakes up. I questioned the dream - asking what happens - but he did not go into any detailed explanation."

Summary and afterthoughts

Mike and I planned to return to Numidia in a couple of weeks to follow up on Mike's interview with Mr Dolan; as we had intended to photograph his auto, measure the tyre marks on the road, examine the tree damage, and check out the brakes and steering system of his auto, too. Mike hadn't performed a thorough field investigation at the site because his interview with Mr Dolan had been completed in the evening hours of 22 October 1973. But, when we returned to Numidia in mid-November and waited at the pre-arranged meeting place which was near the site of the encounter, Mr Dolan failed to show up.

As we waited at the rustic tavern and eatery, Mike asked several of the locals and hunters present if anyone had noticed a fellow waiting for someone to arrive. They assured us that they hadn't. We had actually arrived about twenty minutes sooner than we anticipated. Mike tried to reach Mr Dolan by phone a few times but it appeared that no one was home. So,

after having a late luncheon at the tavern we began our trek back to Philadelphia.

At the time we had more sighting reports than we could handle and Mr Dolan's case was temporarily put aside until we could re-establish contact and continued co-operation with him. Unfortunately, we had similar experiences with several other witnesses that suddenly dropped out of the investigative process which we had adopted at UFORIC. Generally speaking, we visited the witnesses three times and performed more than one field investigation if we felt it to be necessary. So, having a witness unexpectedly drop out meant that we had lost valuable time that we could have been spending with far more co-operative witnesses. We didn't want to just "take a UFO report" - we wanted to get to "know" the person making the report, too.

Compounding the situation still further, Mike had initiated this investigation of Mr Dolan's experience as an APRO representative and I had merely assisted him (with sketches and diagrams up to that point) - all of which he had sent along to APRO headquarters in Tucson, Arizona. Mike also had investigated cases in Minersville and Shenandoah, Pa. and he was awaiting word from APRO on those detailed reports which involved multi-witnessed sightings. When a letter from APRO did arrive, much to Mike's disappointment and anger, it made no mention of his research efforts and the hastily scribbled note rudely informed him that his annual membership dues had not yet been received.

As a result of this unfortunate incident, Mike resigned from APRO and I found it difficult to believe that they never made an attempt to straighten out the situation with him or reinstate him as an investigator. Mike had voluntarily sponsored a UFO convention in Pottstown, Pa. for APRO and had even arranged to provide cost-free lodging for APRO's director when he visited

Pennsylvania. I later discovered that others had "run-ins" of various kinds with the hierarchy of APRO; and, so it was that we decided to avoid creating any additional problems with APRO by dropping Ted Dolan's case from our list of investigative pursuits. As far as we've been able to determine, no one from APRO (which is now defunct) ever followed up on the case either.

So here it is, thirty years later, and I've dusted off this old file and perused its pages once more. I called Mike on the phone just before he passed away and even checked to see if there was still a listing for a Ted Dolan near Numidia, Pa. Yes, ol' Ted is still around and so is this file marked "Incomplete" and "Unknown".

One must keep in mind that this report is just one of many that were filed during the UFO flap of '73. That's back when Charles Hickson and Calvin Parker of Pascagoula, Miss. were said to have been carried aboard a hazy-blue UFO by

heightened his fears.

At the time of Ted's encounter, the search for "Abduction Indicators" in UFO reports was starting to gain popularity with several researchers. But, creatures like "the Greys" of today's abduction scenario hadn't appeared in the reports. Back then, "missing time" was called "lapses in time", while headaches, bad dreams, eye irritations, and strange marks on the observer's skin were thought to be "tell-tale indicators" of contact with alien entities. The commonplace missing-foetus syndrome, hybrids, and screen-memory scenarios of today were unheard of then. But, by the mid-'80s, so-called "nuts and bolts" researching (of the past ufological era) had slipped into the cul-de-sac of specialisation and near-obscurity - while the Abduction school of thought on progressive UFO researching caught the imagination of ufologists and the American public.

Even the Roswell UFO crash story, which was actually a long-dead nuts-and-bolts case, was resurrected and woven into the fabric of the Abduction lore by contemporary film makers and many UFO aficionados. Interestingly, we at UFORIC were sharply criticised by a New York abductionist for not being "vigilant enough" during our witness interviews in regard to the discovery of potential "abduction indicators". But, we felt that many of the questions the Abductionists were asking the witnesses were far too leading and demanding in character.

The present-day line of thought is "why bother to identify a runaway weather balloon from an alien space craft when aliens and hybrids are already walking amongst us!" (i.e., why waste your time proving that alien space

ships are flitting about in the skies when we already know precisely what the alien agenda is and how they are executing their plans to eventually take over our world).

Ironically, no one amongst the major UFO organisations' leadership ever bothered to inform the misguided Abductionist throng that their hypothesis was seriously flawed and a perfect



According to two Mississippi shipyard workers, their evening fishing trip was suddenly interrupted by a UFO and three robot-like creatures that carried them aboard the craft where they were subjected to medical examinations while lying under blinding lights. One of the men said that he was "terrified" during the experience, while the younger fellow apparently fainted as he was whisked into the UFO.

creatures with strange-looking heads and hands like lobster claws. I've often wondered if Mr Dolan heard about Hickson and Parker's harrowing experience on the evening of 11 October (less than five days prior to Ted's encounter). Perhaps that had something to do with his failure to show up for the second interview. Who knows? Perhaps some of Mike's questions may also have

example of what the old-timers used to call "cart-before-the-horse thinking". In other words, the Abductionist craze consists of massive amounts of anecdotal ufology, pure Saucer Logic, unbridled assumptions, and utter nonsense ...

As a wise ol' country boy once told me, "Ya know, ya can make a hell of a lot of pork out of a pig ... but ya can't make a pig out of pork!" And that's precisely what the Abduction experts are trying to do. What's worse is the fact that if an objective researcher attempts to point out the fallacies of the abduction hypothesis he or she is immediately labelled a dim-witted "ideologue", a sceptic and a debunker. "Ya know, ya can lead a chicken to the feed but ya can't make it peck!" is another of the ol' country boy's sayings that comes to mind right about now.

The "cause-and-effect oriented" inquiry employed during the early days of UFO investigation always sought to "verify" report accuracy and establish the credibility of the witness's story as well as the investigator's work on the sighting report (if not to a scientific standard, at least to a common-sense standard). But during the first 35 years of very active investigative activity, the nuts-and-bolts ufologists and the Air Force researchers at Blue Book were completely unable to prove that UFOs (as alien space craft) existed or that they were actually a threat to our nation's security.

Similarly, the Abductionists have been researching the UFO phenomenon since the '80s (and all along they had the "distinct advantage" of knowing which abductees the aliens were supposedly interested in capturing and exactly where the aliens had to go to pick them up). Yet they have failed to obtain or provide any incontrovertible evidence whatsoever that alien space craft, alien hybrids, or the aliens themselves exist!

So the question arises, what might these combined years of non-resolution of the UFO phenomenon's reports tell us about Mr Dolan's case? The answer is that they merely afford us a bit of insight regarding the scope of our speculation on the data that the witness has provided us with and little more. If we are to draw conclusions based on UFO data collected outside our own research standards and protocols, we do so at the risk of contaminating our database and destroying the integrity of our study.

So, with this obvious research problem in mind, I'll offer these options on the possible and/or probable causes for Mr Dolan's reported UFO experience. These are not the only possibilities and they may not be the right ones either.

1. Ted Dolan may have really encountered an alien space craft on that dark mountain road. Moreover, the craft may have landed and taken Mr Dolan aboard. (This is probably what Mr Dolan believes happened to him; and the "fear" of this possibility may have compelled him to discontinue his contact with Mr McClellan, APRO and UFORIC.)

2. Ted may have misidentified a low-flying helicopter's lighting pattern for a UFO - and for some unknown reason he had a pronounced hysterical reaction to it. (This is a possibility - but it fails to shed any light on the UFO's heat emission or explain why Ted perceived the object to be of such an unusual configuration.)

3. Perhaps Ted Dolan was under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance of some sort during the experience. (Mike and I have absolutely no reason to suspect that this was the case with Ted's encounter or the report's emergence.)

4. Mr Dolan may have failed to take his prescribed anti-psychotic medications and suffered a vivid hallucinatory episode as a result of that oversight. Here again, Mike and I do not believe that this is a viable possibility. During our contacts with Mr Dolan (both in person and over the telephone) he was alert, co-operative, and his account of the incident was consistent and cogent. But, we had planned to ask him about any medications that he may have been taking at the time of his experience during our second interview.

5. Perhaps ol' Ted Dolan didn't bag a deer up on that rugged mountain top - but he may have managed to snare a couple of fawning UFO investigators in his homespun yarn. (While I shudder to think that this may be the case, I can't deny that it is a viable possibility.) So, I guess that *Magonia's* readers will just have to take their pick on this one. Mike would have certainly gotten a chuckle out of that.

EDITORIAL

In his article in this issue about the investigation of a close-encounter UFO report, Matt Graeber notes that the witness told his minister about his experience and said: "I asked him if he thought that maybe my time was up when that thing appeared." Graeber notes that he has heard similar statements from other witnesses who apparently felt that the UFOs they saw were "soul transporters".

Such a reaction to seeing strange things in the sky is an ancient tradition, familiar to students of folklore, which regards them as vessels conveying the souls of the dead. One wonders how much the memories of these encounters are distorted by such ideas. Such reactions to whatever stimuli give rise to reports of UFO encounters receive too little attention from the "nuts-and-bolts" school of ufology.

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MAGONIA READERS' MEETINGS

First Sunday of each month, 1915-2230, at the Railway, Putney, opposite Putney station (South West Trains) and about 10 minutes' walk from East Putney station (District Line)

STILL MORE ABOUT MJ-12

Gareth J. Medway

THE MAN who recently faked government bonds from the 1930s worth a trillion dollars, made various mistakes such as 'Dollar' for 'Dollars', and using zip codes, which were not introduced until the 1960s. The point to notice is that whilst nobody is perfect, so that the 'Dollar' error just might have been made on a real bond, no one, in the 1930s, could have included something which did not then exist. In the same way, looking through the literature on MJ-12. I found that only some of the features that have been suggested as evidence for a hoax are truly suspicious.

For instance, on the memorandum dated 24 September 1947, the numerals were out of alignment with the letters, indicating that they were typed at different times. (1) The only reason that I can think why this should happen is that the typist accidentally omitted the numbers, noticed their absence after removing the paper from the typewriter, and then reinserted it to add them. But this could just as well happen with a genuine document as a spurious one.

Leading UFO conspiracy theorist George C. Andrews states that sceptics "were dealt a major blow" when Dr Roger W. Westcott, a stylistic expert, pronounced the signature of H.R. Hillenkoetter on the first MJ-12 document to be genuine. (2) Likewise, Stanton Friedman drew attention to the similarity of the signature on the Truman letter to that on an indisputably authentic Truman memo. But it was then pointed out that they were not merely similar, but apparently identical, implying that the second was merely a photocopy of the first.

Now, it is normally easy enough to distinguish a real signature from a photocopy, but only if you have the original. It cannot be done from a photograph of the page, the only medium on which the MJ-12 papers are available. There is one original piece of paper, the Cutler-Twining memo, but that is unsigned!

It is noticeable that the briefing document does not give away any real information: it says, for example: "A

special scientific team took charge of removing these bodies for study. (See Attachment "C".) ... Numerous examples of what appear to be a form of writing were found in the wreckage. Efforts to decipher these have remained largely unsuccessful. (See Attachment "E".) These supposed attachments have never surfaced. Dare one suggest that this may be because they proved too difficult to forge?

I would say that these features are suspicious but not conclusive. Christopher Allan agrees that there is no definite proof, though he does note a number of highly suggestive features, such as Hillenkoetter supposedly giving his own naval rank wrongly, which is highly unlikely. I should like to know his authority (stated in his review of Stanton Friedman's book a few years ago) (3) for a letter of Hillenkoetter's showing that he hardly knew Menzel, as this is just the kind of giveaway that a hoaxer cannot avoid.

Karl T. Pflock, however, has risen to my challenge to find an anachronism. The Eisenhower Briefing Document says that: "On 06 December, 1950, a second object, probably of similar origin, impacted the earth at high speed in the El Indio-Guerrero area of the Texan-Mexican border after following a long trajectory through the atmosphere." This evidently refers to a story told by Todd Zechel from the 1970s, which was later exploded by Dennis Stacy and Tom Deuley: "At the 1999 National UFO Conference in San Antonio, Texas, Deuley gave a talk in which he presented evidence demonstrating that what had evolved into a 1950 flying saucer crash was actually the fatal shoot down of a US Civil Patrol plane late in World War II." This seems conclusive, but no doubt any MJ-12 believer would simply reject the findings of Stacy and Deuley.

Dr David Clarke has drawn attention to a later MJ-12 paper, the 'Annual Report' of 1952, which stated that: "On August 21 1915, members of the New Zealand Army Corps' First Field Company signed sworn statements that they saw the One-Fourth Norfolk Regiment disappear in an unusually thick brown cloud which seemed to move and rose upward and vanished. There were no traces of the regiment nor their equipment." - the implication being that they were abducted by aliens. As Clarke points out, though

three men did make a statement to this effect, they only did so at a reunion half a century later, in 1965, thirteen years after this alleged report. "It seemed that whoever had faked the MJ-12 papers had failed to do their homework and had based their dossier not on official files but the contents of paperback books on UFOs published in the 1960s." (4)

Something that puzzled me for quite a long time was what might have been the motive behind the creation of MJ-12. Now, I agree with John Harney, who says that motivation is usually irrelevant: "The scientific question is not Why? but How? The forensic scientist doesn't want to know *why* the burglar opened the safe, he wants to know *how* he did it." Anyone *might* be motivated to create a UFO hoax, just as anyone might have a motive for cracking a safe, but one cannot accuse people of being UFO hoaxers or safe crackers on that basis alone.

It seems to me, however, that the commonest UFO hoaxes are those perpetrated by sceptics, in order to demonstrate, if only to themselves, that ufologists are gullible. Other hoaxes are created by people who intend to write books on the basis of them. Very occasionally they are done as part of a confidence trick, as when 'Dr' GeBauer, who sold alleged magnetic devices to detect oil deposits, claimed to have been present at two UFO crash retrievals in New Mexico, simply so that he could say that his latest oil-detecting device worked from back-engineered flying saucer technology. None of these explains the MJ-12 papers, which originated in 'believer' circles, and about which the only book is that of Stanton Friedman, who clearly believes that they are genuine and therefore cannot possibly have been involved in creating them; nor, so far as I know, have they been used to part anyone from their money.

Considerable light may be shed on this question by Philip J. Klass's *Skeptics UFO Newsletter* for March 1997. Klass relates how, in 1983, William L. Moore had told Brad Sparks that his efforts to locate people involved in retrieving the wreckage of the Roswell saucer "had run into a dead end". He went on to suggest that " ... counterfeit government documents containing crashed-saucer information could be used to induce former military personnel to speak out and ignore their secrecy oaths". Later, when

the first MJ-12 papers had become public, and discussed in the *New York Times* among other places, Moore gave a talk about them at the 1987 MUFON conference, concluding with the words: "Now that it is in the papers, if there is anything to it, others will come forward and say: 'Well, now that it has been published in the *New York Times*, now we can talk.' We'll see. There have been a couple of hints so far that maybe somebody will say something." (5) Unsurprisingly, this did not happen, and Moore seems to have faded from public sight since then.

Christopher Allan concludes that, if we can't prove MJ-12 a hoax, we can certainly ask why, if the events described therein did occur, there is no proof. I agree: if the Roswell story had been genuine, then confirmation would have come to light by now, just as Moore anticipated. It has not done, so claims about it can be dismissed.

One other question before (I hope) leaving the Roswell issue: why is it that UFO crashes were most common in 1947-1954, going into decline thereafter, with none at all since the 1970s? (Note: it is true that some alleged cases have only come to light recently, but these were claimed to be old. For example, the Cannock Chase crash was first publicised in Nick Redfern's *Cosmic Crashes*, 1999, but it had supposedly occurred in 1974.) This is despite there being a continued avid interest in UFO 'retrievals'. It is possible, of course, that the Zeta Reticulan government became appalled by the high accident rate among their interstellar spacecraft, and started demanding a higher standard of proficiency before they would issue pilots' licences, but I doubt it.

More likely, the change has been cultural. During the early post-war flaps, the most popular theory was that UFOs were secret weapons; and secret weapons often crashed. If a wreck proved to be one of your own the military would hush it up, and they often did so with enemy craft as well, so Roswell was the sort of thing you would expect to happen. The commonest alleged crash site was New Mexico, which in reality contained the White

Sands missile proving ground, and where in the 1930s (in fact near Roswell) Robert Goddard had conducted many of his experiments into liquid fuelled rockets: so, it was the very state where crashed secret weapons would have been most common. Even those who thought UFOs were interplanetary regarded them as just a little more advanced than terrestrial craft, and so subject to the same failings. Expectations have changed with the years, and the aliens' technology is now supposed to be much more advanced. If the greys can suck abductees through walls, they are unlikely to crash in New Mexico.

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LETTER

Though I agree with Martin Kottmeyer's article on aliens walking through walls, I should point out that it is not well understood just why solid objects are solid. There is no recognised 'force' involved, only the Pauli exclusion principle, which arbitrarily (that is, no one knows why it works) forbids protons and electrons from occupying the same space and energy state. But, in theory, if you could raise your body to a higher energy state (a very big 'if', obviously) a wall would not be a barrier. On the other hand, your atoms would still interact with it, probably reducing you and the wall to brown sludge. If gravity still exerted its force upon you, then you would fall straight through the floor. Even if you somehow avoided these hazards, then you would also be permeable to the air. It would go through you, but you could not breathe or hence get the oxygen into your blood, and so would quickly die of asphyxiation.

There is quite a lot about permeability in oriental writing. The first example that comes to hand is this from Edward Conze's anthology of *Buddhist Scriptures* (translated from Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* book 12), on the magical powers obtainable through successful meditation: "Right through a wall, a rampart, or a hill he glides unimpeded, as though through empty space." In 1941 the Hungarian adventurer Trebitsch Lincoln, who had become an Abbot in his own Buddhist monastery in Shanghai, contacted the German embassy and tried to arrange a meeting with Adolf Hitler, saying that the Tibetan Masters would arrange for an end to the war. Lest he be doubted, he explained that "the instant he was alone with the Fuhrer, three of the wise men of Tibet would appear out of the wall; this would be the best proof of the supernatural powers at the disposal of the Supreme Initiates." Nothing came of this proposal.

Though Kottmeyer has done a good job in collecting references to the motif in fiction, he is probably unaware of the little-known *Mandog*, a children's sci-fi serial which, to my best recollection, was screened by the BBC in the early 1970s. The title derived from the central feature of the plot, a man whose mind had been transplanted into the body of a dog. The first episode began with a girl - apart from the 'mandog', the heroes were all children, naturally - in an ordinary English suburb, who looked out of her front window, and saw the man who lived across the street walk up to his garage. Instead of opening the door, he got out a small device, presumably a 'permeator', and then walked straight through it. At this, she realised that there was something strange about the man across the road and, in fact, he proved to be a time traveller from the future. Indeed, several residents of this seemingly ordinary neighbourhood proved to be men from the future, engaged in a variety of nefarious activities, though I can't recall if going through solid barriers occurred again. It is nice to think that, in the future, labour-saving devices will enable us to walk through doors without troubling to open them.

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